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Pam. China

*Society for the diffusion* - - -



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# The Crisis in China.



# SYNOPSIS.

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## I.—The Crisis.

1. Possibility of the speedy conversion of the yellow race.
2. Four competitors for it.
  - (1) Materialists. (2) Romanists. (3) Russians. (4) Protestants.

## II.—The Methods of Protestant Work—all indispensable.

1. Evangelistic—cannot reach all personally.
2. Educational—takes many years.
3. Medical—deals with men in an abnormal state.
4. Literary—more universal in its operation.
  - (1) Necessary—(a) To supplement the work of the R.T.S. (b) To reach the higher classes. (c) To keep the door open for all Societies and all the other methods. (d) To suit the genius of the Chinese.
  - (2) The method of production. By best writers in all Societies; in two magazines; in books on all matters relating to the Kingdom of God.
  - (3) The method of distribution. (a) Among all civil officers. (b) Among all students. (c) By offering prizes. (d) By opening up depôts.
  - (4) Wonderful results—(a) speedy, (b) widespread, (c) on all classes, (d) profound, and (e) tending towards automatic support.

## III.—The Relative Value of the Methods.

Literary work enormously under-estimated.

## IV.—The Cost of the Literary Branch.

1. Hitherto one-sixth of that of the Bible Societies.
2. Hitherto that of the C. L. S. largely met by private parties.
3. Efficient scheme will cost £4,000.

## V.—Propositions for Meeting the Crisis.

1. Send only the best missionaries—spiritually and intellectually.
2. Let them live in the chief centres.
3. Make special use of the Press and books now.
  - (1) By each Society giving at least one man for literary work.
  - (2) By each Society also granting at least £100 annually for the same.

When both cannot be done let the money grant be made.

# The Crisis in China, AND HOW TO MEET IT.

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[NOTE.—This is mainly the substance of an address delivered at the Secretaries' Association, in London, February 17th, 1897. As it was suggested that the speaker should lay the matter before the Committee of each Missionary Society, it is now printed for presentation to these Committees.]

I.—The Crisis in China: the collapse of its power before Japan.

1. The crisis has brought with it the possibility of the speedy conversion of the yellow race to Christianity. This would be one of the **most important** events in the history of the human race, for their civilisation is the highest non-Christian civilisation in the world, and their number exceeds that of the white race. For some centuries the rulers of China have had Christianity before them in some aspects of it. Now, since the Treaties were made, and especially since the Japanese war, there has been a profound impression produced compelling reconsideration of their past attitude toward Christianity and Christian civilisation.

2. There are now four competitors for the yellow race:—

(1) The modern Materialists and Agnostics without God or religion. These are forming syndicates of scores of millions of pounds sterling to exploit China for their own benefit. Such prosperity never lasts long.

(2) The Romanists, with the Pope supreme instead of God and conscience, light and love. They (in China) are Romanist first, French or German second, and Christian last. They have a Weekly to propagate their views. They have a **million followers** led by Jesuits, who seek to destroy Protestantism. We have to choose between adopting a more rapid method of conversion (not therefore less real), and having to work among the Chinese after their conversion to Romanism.

(3) The Russians, with a mixture of modern materialism and with devout but dark and loveless mediæval Christianity, who seek national aggrandisement and Greek orthodoxy more than Christianity. Russia, besides its vast railway and banking schemes, has decided on a forward missionary movement.

(4) Reformed Christianity, which recognises the Divine wherever found, and seeks to bring the pure life, light, and love of God to the Chinese. Protestants have **200,000 followers.**

As the Chinese have been the foremost in the Far East from the beginning of history, it is likely that they will prove one of the greatest factors in the future history of the human race, therefore by the result of this competition will the future of the human race be greatly influenced. Let us, then, see to it that we at once commend the Gospel in all its purity and fulness to the consciences of these Chinese.

II.—The Methods of Protestant Mission Work. In the main these are four, and they are all indispensable.

1. The **Evangelistic**. This method involves travelling far and wide to secure personal contact with as many Chinese as possible. But we have learnt by experience that it takes a very long time to reach many personally. We have also learnt that nine-tenths of the converts are brought in by the natives themselves. The missionary's work, then, comes to be chiefly inspiring, organising, superintending, teaching, etc., the comparatively few gathered around him, on the lines commanded by our Lord, and followed by His Apostles, of seeking first the worthy, and then sending these to evangelise their countrymen.

2. The **Educational**. This method involves the opening of primary or day schools, secondary or boarding schools, and advanced or Theological Institutions. But the training of native pastors, evangelists, and teachers involves an immense expenditure of time, some pupils being from ten to fourteen years under training.

3. The **Medical**. This is also a most important method, but it only deals with men when they are in an abnormal state. The normal state is that of health. Christianity must commend itself to men in that state also before prevailing generally.

4. The **Literary**. It deals with all the classes that the other methods reach, and some that they do not reach. For influencing men at such a crisis as the present, the literary method has many great advantages. Its **record** in China **is marvellous**. Briefly, the history of this method is as follows:—The Religious Tract Society had been making increasing grants for Christian books and tracts there, but as the work in China grew the R.T.S. could not keep up with the increasing demands of the work, therefore, in 1887, the *Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese* (known in Scotland as the *Christian Literature Society for China*) was founded by the Rev. Alex. Williamson, LL.D., of the United Presbyterian Mission of Scotland.

(1) This Society was necessary for several reasons.

(a) Because a few missionaries without books could not reach the four hundred millions, and the grants of the R.T.S. were insufficient.

(b) Because the first converts were among the poor. The rich and influential would not attend Christian places of worship, and they would not receive the visits of missionaries at their homes. The only way to get over this chasm was by means of a bridge of books which the educated would read at their homes.

(c) Because the policy of the Government and the gentry and educated classes was to oppose Christianity under the belief that the spread of Christianity would be injurious to their nation; hence the introduction of Christianity to almost every new place was accompanied by persecutions and riots more or less violent, and even by massacres, threatening lately to stamp out Christianity altogether, and therefore to stop every method of Christian work.

The leading missionaries of all societies believed that the literary method of the C. L. S. (which is entirely unsectarian, like the Bible and Tract Societies, giving expression to the united views of all true Christians of whatever name) was far more effective in securing a good understanding than appealing to Consuls for protection by gunboats. They believed that if the Chinese only knew the real value of Christianity they would not oppose, but even help on Christian work. Hence, in addition to ordinary religious books and tracts, special apologetic literature was required to meet the peculiar needs of China if missionary work was to go on at all. Therefore, in 1890, the General Conference decided to have fresh work on these lines; in 1892 twenty-nine of the leading missionaries signed an appeal to the churches at home for the support of this work among the higher classes; in 1895 twenty missionaries signed the Memorial drawn up by members of our Society and those of the Hankow R. T. S.; in 1895 the Missionary Association in Shanghai passed a resolution requesting our Society to publish a weekly paper in the Mandarin language so as to meet the masses at large, and not be behind the Romanists.

This we intend to do as soon as we have funds. Thus there was a need of a body of men there who should be above sectarianism—Christians first, their respective denominations after—recognising the spirit of the Master under many different Christian names, and speaking authoritatively to the Chinese on all matters of common interest.

(d) Because it is a form which specially suits the genius of the Chinese. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism have not been propagated so much by preaching as by books. The Chinese masses who cannot read have for millenniums followed the students who can read. The student is eager to learn from us to-day.

(2) The method of production of books. This Society was organised to get Christian books produced by the best literary men belonging to all Societies—British, German, and American—and thus prepare books for the regeneration of China. We have two monthly Magazines—a general one to inform the rulers and students of China of what Christian nations are doing for their peoples, the other a more directly religious one to inform the leaders in our native churches of what the Christian Church is doing all over the world. There are books on—

*The Life of Christ*, shewing how Christ influences mankind.

*Natural Theology*, shewing God in nature and providence.

*Civilisation*, contrasting the Chinese with the Christian.

*The Benefits of Christianity*, historically considered.

*History of the 19th Century*, giving the reforms of Christendom.

*The Witnesses*, a series of biographies of men who give their reasons for giving up their former religions, and becoming Christians.

*How to Support the Nations*, shewing that the development of the nation's resources and the laying down of railways, etc., is the best form of famine relief and deliverance from wretched poverty.

Altogether, small and great, we have over 80 different publications. These publications are used more or less by every missionary society in China. Our aim is to write on all subjects of importance to the Kingdom of God in China.

(3) The Society's method of distributing books to guide the mind of China is as follows:—

(a) By distributing books among all the civil officers of the Government of the rank of mayor and upwards throughout the empire (which is as large as all Europe).

(b) By distributing books among all the students gathered annually at the 200 centres (of districts as large as Wales) for examination. They average about 5,000 students for each centre, and amount to about a million students in all. The future rulers of China are chosen from among these.

Guiding the above, we **guide the 400 millions** of China!

(c) By offering prizes to the students for essays on subjects dealt with in our books.

(d) By opening a central Depot at Shanghai and Depôts at each provincial capital and finally at each examination centre (of which there are ten in each province), where all the best Christian books, Bibles and tracts of all kinds are to be kept on sale.

(4) Some of the wonderful results of the work of this Society:—

(a) They are speedy. The Society was only founded nine years ago. Before the Japanese war subscriptions from non-Christians began

to come in—a thing unheard of before. The Viceroy Chang Chih Tung, in 1894, sent 1,000 taels (£160), and others (among them the head of the China Merchants' Company), *unasked*, sent smaller sums. During the Japanese war, both the Viceroys Li Hung Chang and Chang Chih Tung consulted us. At the close of the war our chief periodical had quadrupled its circulation. After the peace with Japan was signed, when Reform Societies were formed by the highest statesmen in Peking and Shanghai, they frequently asked advice of us.

(b) The results are widespread. Although our headquarters are at Shanghai, many influential Chinamen as well as missionaries in Peking, Hangchow, Foochow and Canton on the coast, and in Honan, Shensi, Szechuen and Hunan in the interior—places as far apart from one another as the capitals of Europe—have written friendly letters to us thanking us for the work of our Society.

(c) Our work has touched very important classes. Many officials, high and low, have now promised us protection and help for Christians.

Many of the Hanlins (*i.e.*, doctors of Chinese literature) thank us for the light already given, and are asking for more.

The modern Sage, Kang Yeu Wei, a man who in China occupies a position somewhat similar to that which Keshub Chunder Sen held in India, and some of his numerous and influential followers offer to co-operate with us.

Several of the native Christian leaders have been greatly quickened in Peking, Foochow, and elsewhere in consequence of our publications in a way not known before by books of any other Society.

The province of Hunan was the hot-bed of anti-Christian literature, but after two years' perusal of our books the Chancellor of Education for the whole province has invited our Chinese Editor to become Professor in their chief College in the provincial capital!

Thus the doors which were threatened to be closed violently against missionaries as their enemies are suddenly opened, and we are invited to enter in as their friends.

(d) The results are also profound. Just consider what the effect would be on England if the manager of the P. & O. or Sir Donald Currie, if Herbert Spencer, one or two of our great Viceroys, and Lord Salisbury were all to announce at the same time their belief that the former attitude of our Sovereign towards Romanism, for instance, was a mistake, and that henceforth it would be better that England should pay more attention to the claims of Rome! Something of that kind has taken place in China, but in favour of Protestant Christianity. The former conservatism is considered a mistake, and leading members of the Chinese Government and many of the leading thinkers are cultivating friendly relationship with Protestant missionaries.

(e) Consider also the bearing of the literary method on self-support. It introduces an **automatic method**. Instead of appealing apparently without end to the churches at home for funds to carry on missionary work in China, the Chinese when once convinced of the value of Christianity may do what the higher classes in Europe long ago did (and what the Chinese themselves did long ago with Buddhist

missionaries)—viz., invite Christian missionaries, and support them, in order that they may not be behind other nations. They are already beginning to invite the missionaries to help them. This will free the Christian Church to do something **more advanced** than laying the foundations.

Each of the above results is remarkable. Together they form a marvellous record, which is not easily paralleled in the annals of missions. Some have estimated that this method is **one hundredfold** more effective than others.

We have only endeavoured to follow more fully **God's Mission laws** revealed in the process of redemption of the human race, and He has brought about the results.

### III.—Reconsider the relative value of methods.

In view of the remarkable results of the *Literary* method being more rapid, more widespread, more profound and more final, should not the missionary societies reconsider the relative value of the different methods? There are in China about 1,000 missionaries mainly given to the Evangelistic method; there are some hundreds devoting themselves mainly to Educational work; there are some hundreds devoting themselves mainly to Medical work. But the number of those who are wholly devoted to the preparation of Christian literature you can count on the fingers of one hand—viz., two American, two German, and only one British missionary! This shows that literary work has been enormously under-estimated.

If the power of Literature be of little consequence, then let it have but little support; but seeing it has proved itself again in China what it was at the Renaissance, at the Reformation, and at the modern Revolutions of Europe, one of the most potent methods of quickly influencing public opinion—then let it have a corresponding degree of support. Finance Committees and those who contribute largely to the Mission cause will carefully weigh these facts.

### IV.—The cost of the Literary Branch.

1. It has only been one-sixth that spent on Bibles. The British and Foreign Bible Society, the National Bible Society of Scotland, and the American Bible Society spend about £15,000 per annum on Bibles in China. But the combined expenditure of the London Religious Tract Society, of the American Tract Society, and of the Christian Literature Society for China is only about £2,200, or one-sixth that of the Bible Societies!

2. The U.P. Missionary Society paid Dr. Williamson's salary, and aided him also in the formation of the Society in Scotland that sends some £300 annually to China. Since October, 1891, the B.M.S. has paid the writer's salary. The Meth. Episc. Society of the United States pays the salary of the Rev. Young J. Allen, LL.D., who edits one of our Magazines, and who has written some very valuable works for us. The Rev. E. T. Williams, who edits our Missionary Review in Chinese, devotes part of his time to earn his own living, and all the rest he devotes to the work of our Society; and Pastor Krantz, who acts as Secretary *pro tem.*, gave us \$1,200 to have one of our books placed in the hands of all the civil officers in the Empire.

3. It has been estimated that £20 per annum will supply sufficient books for distribution at each examination centre, representing a prefecture of 10 counties—*i.e.*, a district about the size of Wales. The smaller books will be given gratis, but the larger ones will be on sale. As there are nearly 200 such centres in China, it would require £4,000 per annum to reach the whole. But hitherto we have only been able to reach some dozen centres, chiefly at the coast.

V.—Propositions for meeting the crisis.

1. Send only the very best missionaries—spiritually and intellectually—to China, bearing in mind that what we want there are **leaders of leaders** at this great national and racial crisis.

2. Let these live at the chief ports, provincial capitals, and the 200 prefectural (foo) cities, centralising there and not at county towns. Let the Chinese agents live at and take charge of these county towns. Confining the residence of the foreign missionaries to the chief centres will prevent the undesirable flooding of the Empire with foreigners, which would only rouse the national prejudice. Increase of foreign missionaries beyond a certain point becomes a hindrance instead of a help.

3. Above all, make a special effort to secure an adequate literary work in China. This can be done :

(1) By each Society setting wholly apart at least one of its best literary men to work with the C.L.S.; or, better still, a due proportion—say one in ten—of its missionaries to begin with.

(2) By each Society, in addition to setting men apart, making a grant of at least £100 annually for the production and distribution of the books of the C.L.S., or, better still, a percentage—say, two or three per cent.—of their gross expenditure in China to begin with.

When both these steps cannot be taken at once, it is of the utmost importance that an annual grant of money be given as soon as possible.

Owing to the urgency of the crisis and the remarkable success that had attended the efforts of our Society, I was requested by our Committee in Shanghai to ~~come home to raise more funds~~

I had an interview with the London Committee of the Christian Literature Society for India in regard to the union of their Society with ours, so as to save working expenses, but the conditions are so different that it was thought wise for the present to work independently.

I next applied to the R. T. S. for a grant of money, but they replied that owing to “diminished resources” they could not take up fresh work at present, yet promise to help when their funds allow.

After that, I went to Scotland to appeal to the public there for an increased effort; this they have made to some extent. But they ask, Why does not London and England help? Some friends advise me to stay in England to form other auxiliaries. Others, again, say “Do not multiply new societies; as this is direct mission work, apply to each of the missionary societies to make an annual grant, as all societies in China are greatly benefited by the literature.”

If the various societies could see their way to assist us, then I could return to China at once, and help my brethren there to make the most of the present unprecedented opportunity. At this stupendous crisis there is **no time to be lost**. A plenteous autumn harvest can only be secured by the right use of spring.

If immediate steps are taken on the lines indicated, then, with God’s blessing, we may expect to see speedy and marvellous results in the turning of the millions of China to Jesus Christ, and this crisis in China made an immense blessing to the rest of the human race; whereas, if we neglect to take adequate measures, God may take our opportunity away and give it to others.

LONDON,

March, 1897.

TIMOTHY RICHARD,

*Secretary,*

*Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese.*



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2. There are now four competitors for the yellow race:—

(1) The modern Materialists and Agnostics without God or religion. These are forming syndicates of scores of millions of pounds sterling to exploit China for their own benefit. Such prosperity never lasts long.

(2) The Romanists, with the Pope supreme instead of God and conscience, light and love. They (in China) are Romanist first, French or German second, and Christian last. They have a Weekly to propagate their views. They have a **million followers** led by Jesuits, who seek to destroy Protestantism. We have to choose between adopting a more rapid method of conversion (not therefore less real), and having to work among the Chinese after their conversion to Romanism.

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The province of Hunan was the hot-bed of anti-Christian literature, but after two years' perusal of our books the Chancellor of Education for the whole province has invited our Chinese Editor to become Professor in their chief College in the provincial capital!

Thus the doors which were threatened to be closed violently against missionaries as their enemies are suddenly opened, and we are invited to enter in as their friends.

(d) The results are also profound. Just consider what the effect would be on England if the manager of the P. & O. or Sir Donald Currie, if Herbert Spencer, one or two of our great Viceroys, and Lord Salisbury were all to announce at the same time their belief that the former attitude of our Sovereign towards Romanism, for instance, was a mistake, and that henceforth it would be better that England should pay more attention to the claims of Rome! Something of that kind has taken place in China, but in favour of Protestant Christianity. The former conservatism is considered a mistake, and leading members of the Chinese Government and many of the leading thinkers are cultivating friendly relationship with Protestant missionaries.

(e) Consider also the bearing of the literary method on self-support. It introduces an **automatic method**. Instead of appealing apparently without end to the churches at home for funds to carry on missionary work in China, the Chinese when once convinced of the value of Christianity may do what the higher classes in Europe long ago did (and what the Chinese themselves did long ago with Buddhist

missionaries)—viz., invite Christian missionaries, and support them, in order that they may not be behind other nations. They are already beginning to invite the missionaries to help them. This will free the Christian Church to do something **more advanced** than laying the foundations.

Each of the above results is remarkable. Together they form a marvellous record, which is not easily paralleled in the annals of missions. Some have estimated that this method is **one hundredfold** more effective than others.

We have only endeavoured to follow more fully **God's Mission laws** revealed in the process of redemption of the human race, and He has brought about the results.

### III.—Reconsider the relative value of methods.

In view of the remarkable results of the *Literary* method being more rapid, more widespread, more profound and more final, should not the missionary societies reconsider the relative value of the different methods? There are in China about 1,000 missionaries mainly given to the Evangelistic method; there are some hundreds devoting themselves mainly to Educational work; there are some hundreds devoting themselves mainly to Medical work. But the number of those who are wholly devoted to the preparation of Christian literature you can count on the fingers of one hand—viz., two American, two German, and only one British missionary! This shows that literary work has been enormously under-estimated.

If the power of Literature be of little consequence, then let it have but little support; but seeing it has proved itself again in China what it was at the Renaissance, at the Reformation, and at the modern Revolutions of Europe, one of the most potent methods of quickly influencing public opinion—then let it have a corresponding degree of support. Finance Committees and those who contribute largely to the Mission cause will carefully weigh these facts.

### IV.—The cost of the Literary Branch.

1. It has only been one-sixth that spent on Bibles. The British and Foreign Bible Society, the National Bible Society of Scotland, and the American Bible Society spend about £15,000 per annum on Bibles in China. But the combined expenditure of the London Religious Tract Society, of the American Tract Society, and of the Christian Literature Society for China is only about £2,200, or one-sixth that of the Bible Societies!

2. The U.P. Missionary Society paid Dr. Williamson's salary, and aided him also in the formation of the Society in Scotland that sends some £300 annually to China. Since October, 1891, the B.M.S. has paid the writer's salary. The Meth. Episc. Society of the United States pays the salary of the Rev. Young J. Allen, LL.D., who edits one of our Magazines, and who has written some very valuable works for us. The Rev. E. T. Williams, who edits our Missionary Review in Chinese, devotes part of his time to earn his own living, and all the rest he devotes to the work of our Society; and Pastor Krantz, who acts as Secretary *pro tem.*, gave us \$1,200 to have one of our books placed in the hands of all the civil officers in the Empire.

3. It has been estimated that £20 per annum will supply sufficient books for distribution at each examination centre, representing a prefecture of 10 counties—*i.e.*, a district about the size of Wales. The smaller books will be given gratis, but the larger ones will be on sale. As there are nearly 200 such centres in China, it would require £4,000 per annum to reach the whole. But hitherto we have only been able to reach some dozen centres, chiefly at the coast.

V.—Propositions for meeting the crisis.

1. Send only the very best missionaries—spiritually and intellectually—to China, bearing in mind that what we want there are **leaders of leaders** at this great national and racial crisis.

2. Let these live at the chief ports, provincial capitals, and the 200 prefectural (foo) cities, centralising there and not at county towns. Let the Chinese agents live at and take charge of these county towns. Confining the residence of the foreign missionaries to the chief centres will prevent the undesirable flooding of the Empire with foreigners, which would only rouse the national prejudice. Increase of foreign missionaries beyond a certain point becomes a hindrance instead of a help.

3. Above all, make a special effort to secure an adequate literary work in China. This can be done :

(1) By each Society setting wholly apart at least one of its best literary men to work with the C.L.S.; or, better still, a due proportion—say one in ten—of its missionaries to begin with.

(2) By each Society, in addition to setting men apart, making a grant of at least £100 annually for the production and distribution of the books of the C.L.S., or, better still, a percentage—say, two or three per cent.—of their gross expenditure in China to begin with.

When both these steps cannot be taken at once, it is of the utmost importance that an annual grant of money be given as soon as possible.

Owing to the urgency of the crisis and the remarkable success that had attended the efforts of our Society, I was requested by our Committee in Shanghai to come home to raise more funds.

I had an interview with the London Committee of the Christian Literature Society for India in regard to the union of their Society with ours, so as to save working expenses, but the conditions are so different that it was thought wise for the present to work independently.

I next applied to the R. T. S. for a grant of money, but they replied that owing to "diminished resources" they could not take up fresh work at present, yet promise to help when their funds allow.

After that, I went to Scotland to appeal to the public there for an increased effort; this they have made to some extent. But they ask, Why does not London and England help? Some friends advise me to stay in England to form other auxiliaries. Others, again, say "Do not multiply new societies; as this is direct mission work, apply to each of the missionary societies to make an annual grant, as all societies in China are greatly benefited by the literature."

If the various societies could see their way to assist us, then I could return to China at once, and help my brethren there to make the most of the present unprecedented opportunity. At this stupendous crisis there is **no time to be lost**. A plenteous autumn harvest can only be secured by the right use of spring.

If immediate steps are taken on the lines indicated, then, with God's blessing, we may expect to see speedy and marvellous results in the turning of the millions of China to Jesus Christ, and this crisis in China made an immense blessing to the rest of the human race; whereas, if we neglect to take adequate measures, God may take our opportunity away and give it to others.

TIMOTHY RICHARD,

*Secretary,*

LONDON,

March, 1897.

*Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge  
among the Chinese.*